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UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000085

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STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA, PM

STATE FOR INL, INR/R/MR, NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR KPAO OPRC PTER CI IR

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - IRAQ

On January 17, business and financial "Diario Financiero" (circ. 30,000) carried an editorial entitled "The United States in Iraq." Quote:

"In spite of the confidence shown by President George Bush, the fact is that Iraq has become a true headache for the most powerful country on the planet.... Whether Bush's new plan in Iraq will render the expected fruit, no one knows. However, it is likely that this issue will continue depleting his political support.... Whatever the case, the United States should reevaluate the role performed in Iraq because George Bush's risk is that the country will become a new Vietnam... The lesson learned for the United States is that it has to focus on strengthening international institutionalism, via the U.N., which in fact has also been damaged by this episode."

KELLY